**Interview with former LTJG Jack Mallory, DC, USNR. Made Tojo's denture. Telephone interview conducted by Jan K. Herman, Historian, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, 5 Jan 1996. (1922-2013)**

**You said in your article that you arrived on active duty in June of '45 and you to Shoemaker Naval Training and Distribution Center, Pleasanton, CA.**

Yes, in August of '45. I had just graduated from dental school in June and the war was still on. Part of my time I had been in the Army's Specialized Training Program when they needed dentists. After I graduated, having been earlier discharged from the A.S.T.P, I chose to go in the Navy. As a brand new LTJG, I was stationed at Shoemaker Training Distribution Center in California. A number of months later the Army found they had a shortage of dentists and the Navy had a surplus. In the summer of 1946, the Navy loaned something like 800 of their dentists to the Army and they served in Army facilities all across the United States and overseas. I was one of a group of those "loaned" that shipped out of Seattle to Japan that August.

**Did you report to an Army officer?**

Yes. When we got to Japan we were first sent to an Army replacement depot outside Yokohama. Then they sent us to duty posts throughout Japan and other Far Eastern destinations.

Although we answered directly to the Army, our pay came from the Navy. I remember having to check in to a Navy facility in downtown Tokyo, where we had to sign in.

**What Army unit were you assigned to?**

Along with another one of our group, Jack MacMahon, I was assigned to the 361st Station Hospital in Tokyo on the bank of the Sumida River.

**What was your specific title?**

I was assigned as the dental prosthetics officer. The general dental clinic up on the main floor took care of all the operative needs--fillings and routine extractions and so forth. Downstairs was the prosthetic department, a single chair with a laboratory. I had three Japanese dentists--two women and one man working for me who have remained friends of mine right up to this day by correspondence. I've been to Tokyo twice in these intervening 48 or 49 years and I've stayed in some of their homes. These young dentists assisted us at that time. They were getting out of dental schools but there was no equipment available and just no place for them to open offices. So they were working for the American military all over Japan as dental assistants and laboratory technicians.

My friend George Foster arrived shortly. Like myself, he was a general dentist at that time but specialized in oral surgery later on. For whatever reason, George was picked to go to the Sugamo Prison two or three times a week. My responsibility was downstairs in the prosthetics laboratory.

**Sugamo was the prison where all the high level Japanese officials were being held for war crimes trials.**

That's right. War crimes trials were being held all over the Far East. There were a dozen or so of the top men who were being tried in Tokyo--International Military Tribunal Far East. This was Japan's equivalent of Germany's Nuremburg.

One night George came back from a trip to Sugamo and said to me, "Guess who was my patient today? Hideki Tojo, the Prime Minister. His mouth is in terrible condition and I know I

will have to take out all his upper teeth and I don't know what we're going to do with the lowers. How about coming to the prison with me and tell me what you think because you're going to have make the dentures."

**What kind of dental facility did you find at Sugamo?**

It was a little room totally surrounded by hallways. It was very rudimentary to say the least. But George was able to do the necessary fillings and extractions there on both staff and prisoners.

**And then they brought in this very infamous character.**

They brought Tojo in with two or three guards. He was wearing his typical kimono and accompanied by his dentist and attorney. They made them stand way off to one side where they could observe. It was his right to have his people there whenever a procedure involving him was going on.

Tojo didn't look at all like the man we had seen in pictures. He and Hitler were always caricatured as the epitome of evil. Tojo's caricatures always included buck teeth and a butch haircut to give him a sharp, harsh look. But he was basically bald. His nickname was "The Razor." I don't know where he got that. But the man I now confronted was a rather tired, grandfatherly, innocuous looking little old Japanese man.

**What did you find when you looked in his mouth?**

By that time, George had already extracted all his upper teeth. He had seven lower anterior teeth left, one of which was just a carious root. These few remaining teeth were in very bad shape periodontally as well. Today we'd do some great heroics and probably save them but the treatment at that time was to extract them.

**Didn't you wonder what kind of dentistry his dentist had been performing over those years?**

Well, yes. But, you have to remember that they had few materials and all resources were going to the military. Here was a man at the very top of the government and his mouth was in a horribly deteriorated condition. You'd think he would have had access to something during that time. Obviously he hadn't had his mouth open to a dentist for years and years.

Speaking through the interpreter, I said, "Mr. Tojo, these lower teeth are very bad and it would be very poor dentistry to make an upper denture that would hit against just six or seven lower anterior teeth." I learned later that Tojo spoke fair English but he chose not to. "The denture," I said "would simply rock back and forth and beat your upper anterior ridge traumatically. We really need to remove those teeth and make a full lower denture to go with the upper." He pondered my words for a moment and then said something to the interpreter, who said to me, "Mr. Tojo says, those teeth will last him for six more months and after that he won't be needing any teeth." And everyone in the room broke out in a chuckle. And pretty soon, he started laughing too.

That was in November 1946. As it turned out, the trial wasn't over until December of '48 so he lived for two more years.

I remember when I took the impression of the lowers, one of the seven came out in the impression. It was an artificial crowned tooth that had a dowel post down the non-vital root

canal. The remaining root was so carious around the dowel that the crown came out in the impression. I still have it.

**Did you use alginate material then?**
Regular alginate.

**You said it was customary that when you made a denture or any other appliance there was a procedure whereby you put the man's name and service number on a piece of paper and embedded it in the denture. What was that all about?**

When we made a dental prosthetic appliance for American military personnel we left a recess in the acrylic body of the appliance and then typed name, rank, and serial number on a piece of paper, put it in the recess, and applied some clear acrylic over the top. It tied that appliance to a specific individual and could then be used for identification purposes.

Of course the slogan "Remember Pearl Harbor" was certainly still ablaze in the minds and hearts of any good red-blooded American. We all thought of it. George did. I did. Many of the doctors and the administrative personnel of the hospital knew I was making this denture. "You've got a chance that nobody else has. Make this sucker chew on those words, 'Remember Pearl Harbor,'" was typical of the advice I was getting from all sides.

But you just don't do things like that in or out of the military. Here's a man on trial for his life and in the American way of justice you're not guilty until proven so. Moreover, you just don't debase somebody like that. And there was the matter of professional ethics. So I refrained from the impulse.

But I figured a compromise was possible. I had been an amateur radio operator and knew the international Morse code. I could slip that in there and nobody would know it. So I took a little round bur and inside the circumference of the denture's peripheral border I inscribed the words, "Remember Pearl Harbor" in dots and dashes.

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**Were the dots and dashes readily visible?**

A denture by nature of its usage is never dry. In the mouth it's covered with saliva. You take it out and wash it and it's wet. And when it's wet many of the cracks and crevices and idiosyncracies of its tissue bearing surface are indistinguishable. So what I had done was not readily seen when it was moist. But if you would dry it, it stood out very plainly.

**So, Tojo actually wore this denture.**

I put it in in mid November of '46. The only ones who knew about it were George, my other roommates, and myself. All were sworn to secrecy lest George and I find ourselves in some kind of trouble. I suppose it also would have been a humiliating thing for the officials there at the prison.

In February 1947 three Baylor University classmates of one of our roommates showed up in Tokyo for dental assignment. One of them was sent to work with us. The Tojo thing was still fresh in our minds and was a big thing for young bucks like us. So we took them out to the prison on the pretext of checking up on Tojo. We called him down to the dental clinic. These newcomers stood around while I got the denture and took it over to wash it off and let them see

the "Remember Pearl Harbor." And then we told them that it was really a secret and they weren't to tell anybody about it. They were very much impressed with our prank on this man of such world importance.

The secrecy of it all didn't last long. This is the way the story got back to me. One of the new dentists wrote the story to his parents in Texas, whereupon his father passed it on to his brother, who proceeded to retell it on his small town radio station. And then it really hit the fan in a big way all across the country and the world. In fact, a friend of mine who was a missionary in Indochina heard it out there. When he heard that a Navy dentist had done this trick he said, "That's got to be Jack Mallory!" I guess I had a reputation as a prankster from early college years.

One afternoon soon thereafter a reporter from the International News Service there in Tokyo called asking for an interview. At first I thought this was my good friend Jim Wasley (from a close-by hospital) trying to con me, but when he asked directions out to the hospital, I knew I was in trouble.

I went upstairs to my dental commanding officer, MAJ Bill Hill and confessed the story. MAJ Hill was a world-wise regular Army man and he said, "That's as funny as hell but it could get us into trouble. You have your office tell him you're not available and you go into hiding. I'll talk to the reporter."

When the reporter showed up he talked to Major Hill who denied everything. The reporter started getting belligerent because he knew there was more to the story but Hill stuck to his story and the newsman left pretty angry.

Nevertheless, that night it was out over the Evening Armed Forces Tokyo Radio Station, WVTR. MAJ Hill called us and asked if we had heard the broadcast. We said we had. He asked if we would be able to grind it out of the denture. When we told him "yes," he said, "You guys get your butts out to that prison right now and get that out!"

So on Valentines Day night, 1947 we commandeered a jeep and drove about 12 miles in a snowstorm to the prison. When we got there a Valentines Day party was in full swing at the officers club. We just mingled because we didn't want to be too obvious. George was waiting for a guard he knew real well to come on duty.

Somewhere around 11 o'clock the young GI arrived and George asked him to go up to Tojo's cell, get his denture, and bring it down. The guard was puzzled, but knowing and trusting George, he disappeared and finally came back with the denture.

Down in the dental operatory we pulled the blinds down and I got a heatless stone and, as lightly as I could, removed the offensive dots and dashes. There were some joe-dandy disks there and I tried to obliterate the marks left by the heatless stone grinding. It was all pretty crude. Then the guard took the denture back to Tojo's cell.

The next morning the story was on the front page of the Armed Forces, *Stars and Stripes* telling how Navy dentists (not naming names) had already gotten their revenge on Tojo by inscribing in his denture the words he would most like to forget... "Remember Pearl Harbor." Right after breakfast George was called to the telephone. It was the very tough colonel in charge of the prison. As I recall, this is how the conversation went:

"LT Foster!"

"Yes sir!"

"Have you seen the front page of *Stars and Stripes* this morning?"

"Yes sir!"

"Is there any truth in this report that 'Remember Pearl Harbor' is inscribed in that denture?"

"No sir."

"Have you personally seen it Recently?"

"Yes sir!"

"And you're really sure it's not there?"

"Yes sir!"

"Can I invite the press to come out and examine it for themselves?"

"Yes sir!"

"Thank you lieutenant."

And that was it. I have no idea if he ever invited the press to the prison and so the story ends very anticlimactically.

My tour of duty in Japan ended in early summer of 1947. In late may I had an opportunity to visit the war crimes trials. A panel of judges presided over the trials, one from each of the Allied nations--the U.S., Britain, France, the Netherlands, India, China, etc. The President of the tribunal was Sir William Webb on loan from Australia where he was on leave from his position as Chief Justice of their Supreme Court or its equivalent. During my tour in Tokyo, Sir William had come to me as a dental patient and had taken a liking to George and me. And so he arranged for me and my friend, Jim Wasley, to sit in reporter's boxes right in the center of the court room. (James Wasley retired as a captain, DC, USNR, is still practicing dentistry in Orinda, CA, and could confirm this courtroom story.) Over on the left was the prisoner's dock. In between were many tables. Up in the balcony facing me were all the Japanese people who were free to come and watch the proceedings.

The defendants filed into their box as they had been doing for over a year and half. Tojo sat down and looked all around the room in a bored manner. I was sitting about 25 or 30 feet away from him. His eyes then came to rest on me and he stopped and seemed puzzled. "Now there's a face I don't usually see in this courtroom," it looked like he was thinking. It was as though he was saying to himself, "I know that guy from somewhere." He studied me for what seemed a long time and finally his eyes lit up and he broke into a big smile. Pointing a finger to his teeth, he bowed toward me in a gesture of thank you, which was nice on his part.

That was the last time I saw Tojo. The trials lasted approximately another 18 months. When he was hanged, he was without the denture I had made him. Shortly thereafter, I saw a newspaper article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* accompanied by a photo of Mrs. Tojo kneeling before his shrine in her home. And there was his trademark big horned-rimmed glasses, and the false teeth he wouldn't be needing anymore. All traces of the crude code erasure had been obliterated when a number of months later, my prosthetics officer position replacement, Army dentist Lloyd Church, was called to the prison to reline the increasingly loosening denture.

**You've been carrying this story around for a long time.**

The only reason this story ever came up now was that the 50th anniversary of the end of the war with Japan was this past August/September. Shortly before that I had written this story on paper at the insistence of my family. My son took it to the local paper suggesting it might be of interest at that anniversary time. They printed the article I sent you. The Associated Press picked up on it and it showed up in newspapers all over the U.S. and Japan. TV crews came to my home for interviews (including TBS-Tokyo Broadcasting System). My Japanese friends in Tokyo telephoned me so excitedly when the story hit over there. Some of them had had a part in

the laboratory proceeding in the making of the denture but weren't aware of the "Remember Pearl Harbor" part of it. At the time of the Tokyo visit in 1969 I told them about it over dinner at one of their homes. They all chimed in "Why didn't you tell us about this back then?" They all seemed to understand when I replied that "the timing just didn't seem right."